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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

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National Intelligence Council

NIC #00817-87/1
27 February 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: Distribution

FROM: Carl W. Ford, Jr.
National Intelligence Officer for East Asia

SUBJECT: East Asia Warning and Forecast Meeting - 18 February 1987

1. Attached is my report to the DCI based on our meeting held on 18 February 1987. Please let me know if there are any significant amendments, additions, or corrections.

2. Next month's Warning and Forecast Meeting will be held Wednesday, 18 March 1987 at 1400 hours in Room 7E62, CIA Headquarters. Recommendations for discussion/warning topics should be forwarded to this office by COB 9 March 1987.

3. It is essential that you telephone your attendance intentions to [redacted] and have your clearances verified to us by your security office by NOON, 17 March 1987. Attendees from outside agencies are advised to arrive early to avoid parking problems created by construction work. Please enter the compound through Gate 1, the Route 123 entrance.

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Carl Ford
Carl W. Ford, Jr.

Attachment

18 February 1987 Warning Report

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

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National Intelligence Council

NIC #00817-87
27 February 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: Carl W. Ford, Jr.
National Intelligence Officer for East Asia

SUBJECT: 18 February 1987 East Asia Warning and Forecast Report

1. February's meeting focused on the political situation in South Korea and particularly on five key players who might be involved in a potential succession to President Chun Doo Hwan. President Chun has said he will step down in 1988, but, as yet, he has not identified persons or procedures which could establish a smooth succession. In view of growing political unrest in South Korea, the leadership question is likely to become more serious as 1988 approaches.

2. Cardinal Kim. [redacted] CIA, discussed Cardinal Kim. Unlike Cardinal Sin in the Philippines, Cardinal Kim is not likely to play a key role in South Korea's leadership transition. Kim's concerns are principally on matters of social justice and he has spoken out strongly and forcefully on these issues. Nevertheless, he eschews confrontation and is also an advocate of political stability. He has wide-ranging contacts with a variety of government officials and dissidents. He probably is inclined to support opposition leader Kim Young Sam rather than Kim Dae Jung. Because there are only 2 million Catholics in South Korea, Kim's influence throughout society is not pervasive though his position has some moral influence. [redacted]

[redacted] Reports indicate he asked both Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam to retire from politics and called on Chun to do the same after 1988. Kim will limit his political activities to avoid antagonizing the Vatican and the NSP.

3. Kim Young Sam. [redacted] CIA, discussed Kim Young Sam. Kim is nearing the culmination of a 30 year political career and sees 1988 as perhaps his best and last opportunity to achieve the Presidency. His relationship

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with Kim Dae Jung is one of conflict and collaboration, as both men seek the ultimate prize, but are both in opposition to the present regime. Kim Young Sam does have a somewhat negative image among Koreans as having risen to the top chiefly through good fortune and having never demonstrated brilliant leadership or having "paid his dues" while on the way up. He must have the support of Kim Dae Jung if he is eventually to succeed him as leader of the main opposition party. Opposition hardliners question his commitment to the struggle for democracy. The problem for Kim, and indeed, the opposition in general, is that they have not been able to balance hard line anti-government rhetoric with effective parliamentary participation. Kim is not well positioned at this stage to lead the opposition in new directions and will more likely follow the lead of Kim Dae Jung. If anything, he is more likely to play a destabilizing or unsettling role--by going along with Kim Dae Jung--as the succession issue develops.

4. Roh Tae Woo. [REDACTED] CIA, discussed Roh Tae Woo. Roh is the person best in position to succeed Chun. He is a member of the same Korean Military Class as Chun (1955), has had a distinguished military career, and is Chun's point man in the ruling Democratic Justice Party. He maintains close personal ties with Chun, though some reporting indicates Chun may feel somewhat threatened by Roh. Reporting on Roh is contradictory. Some accounts say that although cautious, he is chafing under Chun and would support change; others indicate he is content to remain number two, not rock the boat, and wait for his turn. Roh appears to be biding his time and would not move against Chun unless he perceived he had widespread military support to oust the President. In addition, Roh values stability and would not favor ousting Chun if it seemed certain to invite North Korean opportunism.

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5. Kim Chin Yong. [REDACTED] DIA, discussed Kim Chin Yong. Major General Kim is a member of the Korean Military Academy Class of 1961 and was key in Chun's rise to power. He now commands the 3rd Korean Military Academy which is not a prestigious position; but he is probably waiting for bigger and better things. Kim is extremely egotistical and arrogant and expresses confidence that he is still on the way up. He is a favorite of Chun, but also has moved to get persons loyal to himself placed in good positions which he hopes to capitalize on in the future. He also seeks to expand his influence beyond his own graduating class. He is personally decisive and might act if the leadership transition were to go awry. If he did act precipitously, the result could be highly destabilizing. While he has a following among younger officers, many would not be inclined to support him.

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6. Chang Se Tong. [REDACTED] who prepared comments on head of the NPA, Chang Se Tong, was not able to be present so I briefed the meeting on his comments. Chang is not well known to Americans and is not likely very knowledgeable about Americans. He is gradually becoming more forthcoming in his discussions with Americans and from these we know that he is very self confident and is highly confident of his relationship with the President. He is also a very strong rival of Roh. He does not have an independent power base beyond Chun's personal favor; his relationship with the military is strained and he has been strongly criticized by military leaders. He is not likely to take independent action during leadership transition, but will likely continue to be an important source of support for Chun because of the power of his agency.

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7. Following these personal assessments, David Blakemore, Director of the Office of Korean Affairs, Department of State commented on the reports and on his recent trip to South Korea. He reported that the Embassy was extremely pessimistic about the unfolding political situation. The government shows no signs of compromise on the issue of constitutional revision and will forcefully assert the ruling party's position. Perhaps after 1988 those who want liberalization can start over. None of the people discussed in the reports above will likely make a key difference unless some highly unexpected event triggers change. Cardinal Kim will not make a difference unless there is an unprecedented degree of moral outrage. Kim Young Sam is a perpetual acolyte without enough following to make a difference. Roh is frozen--to sit and wait; he is afraid of Chun, is hesitant, and will not urge flexibility. General Kim and his cohorts could only act in an extreme situation. Chang has probably been promoted beyond his capability and will not change the course of events; he has no life after Chun. Kim Dae Jung could make a difference, and the confluence of events which would bring him to power are highly uncertain. Chong Ho Young now has a better image than before but his ability to affect the situation is uncertain. What can the United States do? The speech by Assistant Secretary Sigur on 6 February was an important step. The speech received great attention from the Korean media and we know that President Chun is very unhappy about it. Perhaps the best we can do is to position ourselves so that we will take less blame in March 1988.

8. The ensuing discussion made the following key points:

- Chun Doo Hwan remains the key figure; at this stage, the transition remains highly dependent on what he personally decides to do.
- The undercurrents now are similar to the early 1970's. Just when someone appears to be "sticking his head up" just as quickly the head suddenly goes down.
- No one brings bad news to the President; he has a "kill the messenger" syndrome so his subordinates do not tell him the truth.

Warning Indicators

9. There is every indication that Chun intends to cling to power, if not formally then from behind the scenes. This will probably exacerbate political instability in South Korea in the coming months. Those around Chun are not likely to act against him, however, unless he is perceived as declining in his ability to manage the situation. Secretary of State Shultz will soon meet with Chun and might get an angry riposte to Assistant Secretary Sigur's speech.



Carl W. Ford, Jr.

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18 February 1987 East Asia Warning and Forecast Meeting

Attendees

NAME

Carl Ford

CIA

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 ANIO/EA
 NIC/AG
 ICS/HCS
 OEA
 OEA
 OEA
 OIR/RASB
 OIR
 OIR
 LDA/PPD
 OIR
 FBIS
 FBIS
 DO/EA/SK
 DO/EA/NK
 DO/EA/SK
 CIR/DB
 OIR/DB
 FBIS
 OEA
 OEA
 FBIS

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OTHER

David Blakemore

State
 NSA
 DIA
 DIA
 DIA
 DIA
 DIA/DE-2
 USMC
 Army
 Air Force
 O/Vice President
 DATT(Designate)/Korea
 DIA (Korea/Japan Branch)

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Maj. Wally McTernan
 LTC Ed Haydash
 Maj. Betty Price
 Terry Mattke

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